



DEPARTMENT OF  
**PUBLIC HEALTH  
AND WELLNESS**



***Dr. Joann Schulte, Director of Louisville Metro Public Health and Wellness***

After a 14-month national search, Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer named Dr. Joann Schulte the city's new public health director in late March.

"Dr. Schulte brings a wealth of public health experience gained at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Institutes of Health and in such urban centers as Dallas and Atlanta," said Fischer. "She is well-qualified to build on the progress we have made toward making Louisville a much healthier city."

Board certified in general pediatrics and preventive medicine, Dr. Schulte is a seasoned public health professional with extensive experience in epidemiology, toxicology and health communication. She comes to Louisville from Dallas, Texas, where she served as a Medical Toxicology Fellow at the North Texas Poison Control Center at Parkland Memorial Hospital.

"I am tremendously happy to have the opportunity to serve in Louisville," said Dr. Schulte. "This position represents the culmination of my public health experience. I hope to bring all that I have learned to build on the progress of my predecessors and significantly improve the overall health of Louisville."

"I think that I first learned about Louisville as a young girl of about eight or nine," said Schulte. "Somehow I learned that the first Saturday in May is when the Kentucky Derby was run. So the next year I watched it and wanted to know why the thorns in the blanket of roses didn't make the horse jump," she

said. “Like many girls, I was horse mad for a while and wanted to be the first girl jockey on the first filly to win the Derby. I was crushed to learn that Regret was the filly that ran and won in 1916 with a male

jockey. Then I wanted to train a horse or own one. But we weren't rich. In fact, I was the first person in my family to go to college. About then horse madness was over!”

Prior to her post in Dallas, Dr. Schulte was an Editorial Fellow with the *New England Journal of Medicine*. Much of Dr. Schulte’s public health career has been spent as a medical epidemiologist at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and at the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

During her time at the CDC, she investigated more than 100 disease outbreaks, and worked in vaccine-preventable diseases, immunizations, HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases and tuberculosis. At the NIH, Dr. Schulte was the medical epidemiologist on a Phase III trial to evaluate the efficacy of genital herpes vaccine in women.

“I have an idea of what’s been done and is being done nationally,” Schulte said. “But I think the most effective public health is what you can do at the local level.”

“Louisville is a city that acts: it doesn’t react,” said Schulte. “Louisville is good at looking at itself and figuring out its problems –and it’s good at taking action once those problems are identified. I think that is pretty well documented with innovations like the *Healthy Louisville 2020* plan,” she said. “People from a broad range of backgrounds, expertise and organizations worked on that plan before it came out in 2014. There are real goals there and they are based on real data.”

Dr. Schulte also has served as the chief of epidemiology for HIV/AIDS for the Texas Department of State Health Services and as acting state epidemiologist for the Florida Department of Health and chief of its outbreak investigation unit. There she was recognized for her work on public health issues related to eight hurricanes that struck the state in a two-year period.

Dr. Schulte will also have a faculty appointment at the University of Louisville School of Public Health and Information Sciences, in the Department of Epidemiology and Population Health. Louisville Metro Government and the university will split Dr. Schulte’s annual salary and benefits equally.

“The combination of the public health director position and teaching at the university made the Louisville post a position that I really wanted,” said Schulte. “Having a city where the health department and the School of Public Health and Information Sciences are working together in the real world is a unique opportunity.”

“Dr. Schulte brings an impressive array of experiences to the position, and we look forward to collaborating with her on initiatives to tackle the health issues of our city and region as we prepare the next generation of public health professionals,” said Craig H. Blakely, PhD, MPH, Dean of the University of Louisville School of Public Health and Information Sciences. “Dr. Schulte has a solid mix of field work and scholarly productivity. Her wealth of experience should serve the city well.”

Dr. Schulte supports Louisville’s syringe exchange program that was established in June. “The idea of needle-exchange is a harm reduction program that makes a lot of sense. It’s a good idea that needs to continue,” she said.

Dr. Schulte's background should also serve her well in putting the "public" in public health. Before attending medical school, she was the medical reporter for the *Dallas Morning News*. Dr. Schulte also currently serves on the editorial board of *Pediatrics*, published by the American Academy of Pediatrics, and is an assistant editor for the *Southern Medical Journal*.

Dr. Schulte previously served as a Commissioned Officer in the U.S. Public Health Service, assigned to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, and to the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland. She retired from the CDC in 2013.

Dr. Schulte earned a medical degree from Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine, a Master of Public Health in Epidemiology from Emory University and a Bachelor of Science degree in Health Science from Florida International University. She also holds a Medical Editing Certificate from the University of Chicago.

Dr. Schulte will replace Dr. LaQuandra Nesbitt as the director of the Louisville Metro Department of Public Health and Wellness. Dr. Nesbitt left Louisville in late 2014 to become the public health director of Washington D.C. Since then, the Louisville health department has been led by its medical director, Dr. Sarah Moyer. Dr. Moyer will continue with the department as its medical director.